



## United States Department of the Interior



### BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

#### Color Country District Office

#### Cedar City Field Office

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[www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/cedar\\_city.html](http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/cedar_city.html)

#### **In Reply Refer To:**

4720 (UTC010)

April 30, 2014

Dear Reader:

The Preliminary Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Bible Spring Complex Wild Horse Gather and Removal and Fertility Treatment Plan DOI-BLM-UT-C010-2014-0035-EA is available for review and comment on-line at <http://www.ut.blm.gov/> or at <https://www.blm.gov/ut/enbb/>. Hard copies are available from the Cedar City Field Office at the above address.

This document is tiered to the Pinyon Management Framework Plan (1983). If a determination is made that implementation of the Proposed Action would not result in “significant environmental impacts” a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) would be prepared to document that determination and a Decision Record issued providing the rationale for approving the chosen alternative.

The four Herd Management Areas (HMAs) that make up the Bible Spring Complex are located in western Iron and Beaver counties, approximately 30 miles west of Minersville, Utah in the Wah Wah and Indian Peak mountain ranges. The Bible Spring Complex (Bible Spring, Blawn Wash, Tilly Creek and Four Mile HMAs) is approximately 222,929 public, private and state land acres. The Complex ranges from 5,400 feet in the valleys to 9,100 feet in elevation.

This EA has been prepared to analyze the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) Cedar City Field Office (CCFO) proposal to implement the Bible Springs Complex Gather, Removal and Fertility Treatment Plan. The purpose of the project is to achieve a thriving natural ecological balance, achieve and maintain wild horse Appropriate Management Levels (AML), collect information on herd characteristics, determine herd health, maintain sustainable rangelands, and maintain a healthy wild horse population within the Bible Springs Complex. The proposal includes gathering and removing excess wild horses and the application of fertility control methods over a ten year period.

The current AML of 80-170 wild horses for the Bible Spring Complex was set in the Bible Springs, Blawn Wash, Four Mile and Tilly Creek Wild Horse Appropriate Management Level Assessment, signed 4/18/2005 (EA# UT-040-04-47), and is in conformance with the land use plan that allocated forage for wild horses, livestock, and wildlife. The CCFO has attempted since the completion of the Pinyon Management Framework Plan in 1983 to maintain the wild horse population on the Complex within the AML.

Wild horse populations above AML compete for forage, water, and cover allocated to wildlife and livestock. High populations of wild horses impact riparian areas with increased trailing, vegetative use, and trampling. Wild horses will drive away livestock and native ungulates from watering and feeding areas.

In order to meet local and national wild horse program goals, the objectives of the proposal would be to:

- maintain wild horse populations within AML;
- slow population growth to maximize the time between gathers to remove excess horses;
- reduce the number of wild horses being placed in short-term holding or long-term pastures;
- remove wild horses that occupy areas outside the Bible Spring Complex boundary; and
- maintain a thriving, natural ecological balance and multiple use relationship on public lands in the Bible Spring Complex.

Comments on the Environmental Assessment for the Bible Spring Complex Wild Horse Gather and Removal and Fertility Treatment Plan DOI-BLM-UT-C010-2014-0035-EA will be accepted for 30 days until May 30, 2014. Interested individuals should mail written comments to the BLM Cedar City Field Office, 176 E. DL Sargent Drive, Cedar City, Utah 84721 Attn: Cedar City Field Office Manager or send email to: [blm\\_ut\\_biblesprings@blm.gov](mailto:blm_ut_biblesprings@blm.gov). Any other comments will not be accepted. Comments need to be post marked or emailed to [blm\\_ut\\_biblesprings@blm.gov](mailto:blm_ut_biblesprings@blm.gov) no later than May 30, 2014.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment--including your personal identifying information--may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. All submissions from organizations and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations and businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety.”

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the Cedar City Field Office, at (435) 865-3000.

Sincerely,

/s/ Elizabeth R. Burghard  
Elizabeth R. Burghard  
Cedar City Field Office Manager